

Link Noise Reduction Project

Sound Transit worked to address concerns about Link light rail train noise. Below is a summary of each major noise issue and the steps taken to reduce levels from the Link light rail system.

Rail grinding was completed in December 2009

Grinding the rails is one step Sound Transit has taken to attempt to reduce high-frequency noise from its Link light rail trains. The rail grinding work was done during evening and overnight hours to minimize disruption to train service. The cities of Seattle and Tukwila granted variances from their noise ordinances to permit the nighttime work, but noise levels were moderate.

The grinding reduced the high-frequency noise in many areas, but there are some locations where this noise is still present. Sound Transit will measure noise levels again, after the grinding marks on the rails have worn smooth.

Wheel squeal on track curves

Sound Transit installed eight track lubricators to substantially reduce the wheel squeak on track curves. Four of the lubricators are installed on each side of the Mount Baker Station, and another four are installed in Tukwila on the tracks to the east of the Tukwila International Blvd Station.

Crossover track switch noise on MLK

Sound Transit modified two switch crossings in the Rainier Valley so train wheels have a smoother running surface through the switches. This resulted in a minor noise reduction. Sound Transit is continuing to evaluate next steps and more effective solutions for this noise problem.

Safety bells on trains and at pedestrian crossing signals on MLK

Sound Transit has reduced the volume of the train bells and coordinated with train operators to reduce the length of the bell-ringing. Safety considerations prevent us from reducing them much further.

Station loudspeaker noise

Sound Transit has reduced the sound level for the station loudspeakers and turned them off after 10:00 pm at night for all stations in the Rainier Valley.